

The Elders call for swift and decisive action in the Central African Republic

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



*Muslim families fearing militia attacks flee their homes in Central African Republic.
Photo: Aurelio Gazzera | Caritas*

The Elders today called on the international community, notably the UN Security Council, to take all possible measures to restore peace and security urgently to the Central African Republic (CAR), where inter-communal violence has worsened and credible allegations of widespread human rights abuses have been reported.

Kofi Annan, Chair of The Elders and former UN Secretary-General, said:

“I urge the Security Council to act swiftly and decisively and authorise the resources urgently needed to begin stabilising the CAR. The interim President, Catherine Samba-Panza, is a courageous leader who needs all the support she can get at this difficult moment for her country.”

Over the past two months, more than a thousand deaths have been reported in the capital, Bangui, alone in clashes between Muslim ex-Séléka fighters and Christian anti-Balaka militia forces. Nearly a million people have been displaced in the capital, while more than half of the 4.5 million inhabitants of the CAR are reported to be in need of humanitarian assistance.

“I pray that the people of the CAR will come to their senses soon and stop the bloodshed,” said **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**. *“The reports of sexual violence, recruitment of child soldiers and other grave abuses, including the beheading of children, are absolutely ghastly. The African Union, the UN and the European Union all have a part to play in restoring peace, getting help to those in need, and preparing for fresh elections.”*

The Security Council has adopted three resolutions on the CAR in recent months and is due to meet again tomorrow (Thursday 20 February) to hear a report from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who has provided critical leadership in this crisis.

About The Elders

The Elders are independent leaders using their collective experience and influence for peace, justice and human rights worldwide. The group was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

The Elders are [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Kofi Annan](#) (Chair), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) (Deputy Chair), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Desmond Tutu](#) is an honorary Elder.

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